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TERRIFYING! STARTLING! SUSPENSE!

JULY 1953

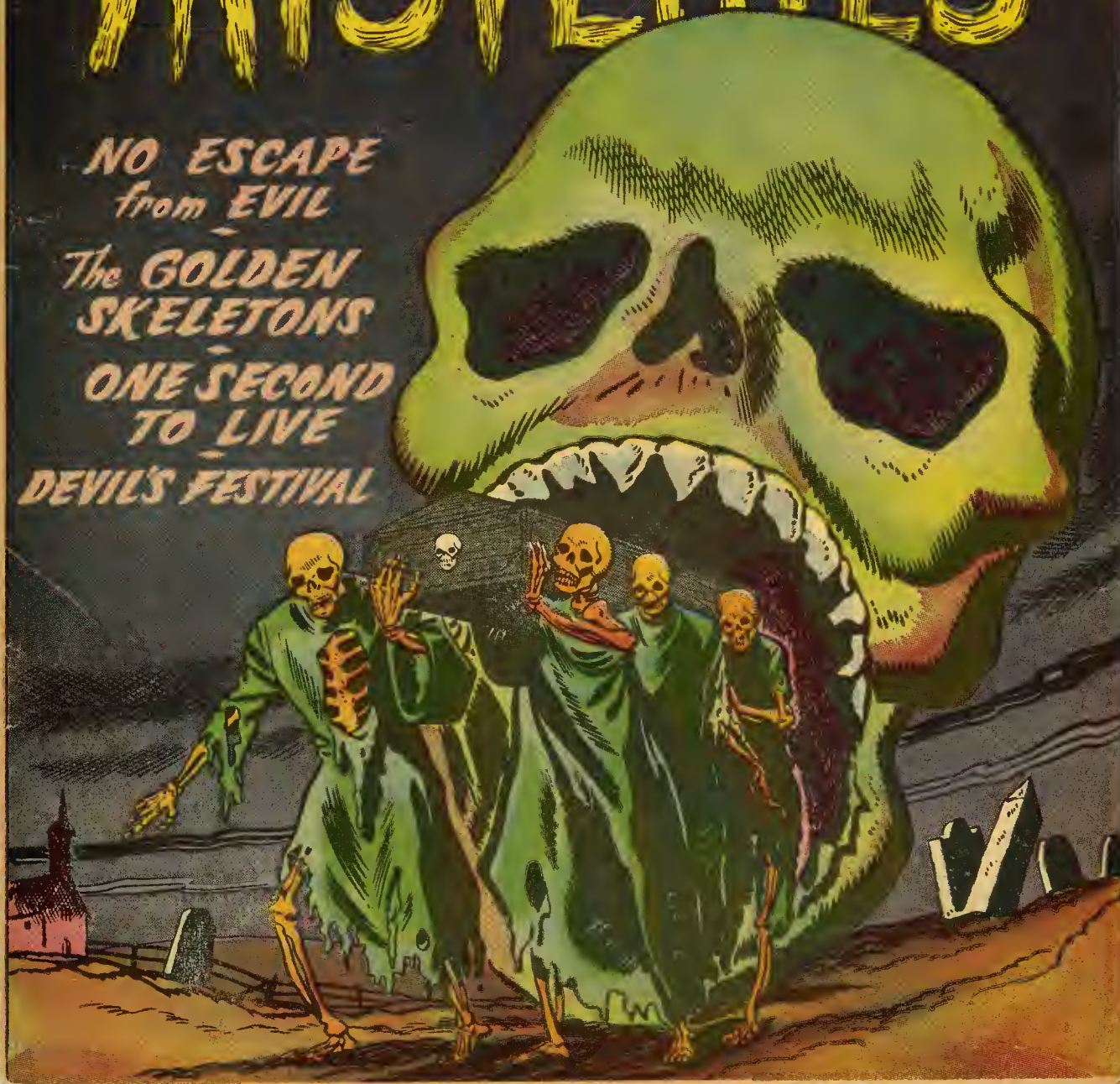
No. 12



10c

STRANGE MYSTERIES

*NO ESCAPE
from EVIL*
*The GOLDEN
SKELETONS*
*ONE SECOND
TO LIVE*
DEVIL'S FESTIVAL





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The GOLDEN SKELETONS



ENOCH GRUBER, GRAVEYARD-KEEPER, AND HIS WIFE MATILDA, WERE SOURED ON LIFE BECAUSE OF THEIR MEAN, IMPOVERISHED EXISTENCE. SUDDENLY, FABULOUS WEALTH WAS WITHIN THEIR REACH! ALL THEY'D HAVE TO DO TO GET IT, WAS HACK UP DEAD BODIES... AND RICHES BEYOND THE WILDEST OF DREAMS WOULD BE THEIRS! BUT THE GRUBERS OVERLOOKED THE TERRIBLE WRATH OF...THE EERIE CADAVERS...

RESTWELL GRAVEYARD IS ONE OF THE OLDEST RESIDENCES OF THE DEAD IN THE COUNTRY. SOME OF ITS INMATES DIED HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO...

AND IN THE DIRTY, BARE SHANTY OF THE CARE-TAKER, IT LOOKS AS THOUGH ANOTHER CORPSE WERE IN THE MAKING...

YOU'VE TAUNTED AND NAGGED ME ABOUT OUR POVERTY ONCE TOO OFTEN, WOMAN! I'M GOING TO SHUT YOUR YAKETY-YAKING TONGUE FOR GOOD! FOR

GOOD, YOU HEAR?

STOP, ENOCH! DON'T DO IT! YOU'LL KILL ME!! YOU CAN'T... YOU MUSTN'T DO THIS TO THE WOMAN YOU LOVE!



STRANGE MYSTERIES

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! GO AHEAD AND DO IT, THEN! DEATH WOULD BE BETTER THAN THIS MISERABLE, ROTTEN EXISTENCE WITH YOU! KEEP YOUR POVERTY! I'D RATHER HAVE THE GRAVE AND ITS WORMS!



ALL THE TIME, SNIVELING, COMPLAINING, WHINING! I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO REALLY SCREAM ABOUT... YOU WOULDN'T LIKE THAT, HUH? WOULD YOU?



AN INSTANT BEFORE ENOCH CAN STRIKE, THE SHANTY IS RATTLED ABOUT IN A MIGHTY UPHEAVAL...

WHAT? WHAT'S HAPPENING? MATILDA! WHAT IS IT?

EVERYTHING'S SHAKING! ENOCH! CAN IT BE THE END OF THE WORLD?



AN EARTHQUAKE! THE GRAVEYARD IS A SHAMBLES! I'D BETTER INVESTIGATE! WHAT A MESS! EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME!



CHARGING INTO THE GRAVEYARD, ENOCH FINDS THAT THE VIOLENT QUAKE HAS WROUGHT GREAT FISSURES IN THE SOIL... FORCING UP SPLIT, ANCIENT COFFINS...

IT'LL TAKE ME MANY A DAY TO REPAIR THIS DAMAGE! BLAST THAT MATILDA! SHE'S ALWAYS BROUGHT ME ROTTEN LUCK!



GET OUT, CURSE YOU! I HATE YOU! YOU... YOU GRAVEYARD RAT!

I'LL GIT! BUT YOU'D BETTER NOT BE HERE WHEN I GET BACK!! OR I'LL DIG MY FIST INTO YOUR SCREAMING FACE! THAT'S A PROMISE!



AND THEN HE SAW IT IN ONE OF THE SMASHED COFFINS. A LEERING SKELETON OF...

GOLD! THE SKELETON IS MADE OF PURE GOLD!! GREAT SCOTT! I WONDER IF... THE OTHER COFFINS! MAYBE...



BACK TO HIS SHANTY RACED OLD GRUBER, PANTING,
A WILD GLEAM IN HIS AVARICIOUS ORBS...

YOU AGAIN! I'D HOPED TO HAVE
BEEN GONE BEFORE YOU GOT BACK!
I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOUR UGLY
FACE AGAIN, SWINE! PIG!!

MATILDA! YOU
MUST COME WITH
ME TO THE GRAVE!
HA-HA! COME WITH
ME WHERE THE CORPSES
LIE... NOW! COME, MY
PRETTY!

HELP! HELP! ME
SOMEBODY! OLD
GRUBER HAS GONE
MAD! HE'S GOING
TO MURDER ME
IN THE GRAVE-
YARD! HELP!
HELLP!

STOP SCREAMING,
FOOLISH WOMAN! IF
YOU DIE, IT WILL
BE OF SHEER JOY!
YOU WILL BE GLAD
OLD GRUBER IS
DRAGGING YOU
AMONG THE TOMBS!
HEE-
HEE!



LOOK, MATILDA—A SKELETON OF
PURE GOLD! AND I'VE INVESTI-
GATED OTHER OLD, BROKEN COFFINS!
THEY ALL HOLD GOLDEN SKELETONS!
THIS GRAVEYARD IS A
VERITABLE TREASURE
HOUSE!

BUT... HOW CAN THIS
BE? ENOCH! CAN
THIS REALLY BE
TRUE? IT ISN'T A
JOKE OF SOME
KIND?

THE WAY I FIGURE IT, THERE MUST
BE SOME UNKNOWN CHEMICAL IN
THIS SOIL WHICH, OVER HUNDREDS
OF YEARS, HAS TRANSFORMED
THE SKELETONS INTO GOLD!



NOW, WOMAN, IF YOU STILL WISH
TO GO, YOU CAN LEAVE OLD
ENOCH! YOU CAN GO AWAY...
FIND SOMEONE WHO HAS WEALTH.
YOU CAN LEAVE ME HERE... ALONE...
HA-HA! —AND
IMPOVERISHED...

NO—NO, ENOCH! I COULDN'T
POSSIBLY LEAVE A MAN OF
YOUR FINE INTELLECT AND
GRACIOUS WAYS! LET
ME KISS YOU, ADORABLE
HUSBAND!

HE STILL SMELLS
BUT NOW HE
SMELLS RICH!

HA-HA! WHAT
A DIFFERENCE A FEW
GOLDEN SKELETONS CAN
MAKE! A FEW MOMENTS AGO,
MATILDA CONSIDERED ME A
DESPISED RAT! NOW I AM A
DESIRABLE GENTLEMAN!
HAA—AAAA!!



TWITTERING LIKE TWO GREEDY LOVEBIRDS, ENOCH AND MATILDA DRAGGED ONE OF THE GRUESOME PRIZES BACK TOWARD THEIR DISMAL DOMICILE...

HEH-MEH! IMAGINE! A VERITABLE GOLD MINE OF CORPSES IN OUR OWN BACK-YARD! WHAT A LUCKY STRIKE! THIS MEANS RICHES!

THIS SURPASSES MY FINEST DREAMS! SOON WE'LL HAVE ALL THE LUXURIES MONEY CAN BUY! FURS, DIAMONDS...

BACK AND FORTH THEY TRAVELED, AGAIN AND AGAIN, UNTIL SEVERAL OF THE PREVIOUS SKELETONS WERE SAFELY LODGED IN THE SHANTY, THEN...

SMASH THE BONES TO PIECES, DARLING! WE'LL GRIND THEM DOWN TO GOLD DUST AND NO ONE WILL EVER SUSPECT THE SOURCE OF OUR SUDDEN WEALTH!

I NEVER DREAMED YOU COULD BE SO RESOURCEFUL, DEAR ENOCH!



BUT AS MAN AND WIFE BATTERED AWAY WITH GHOUlish DELIGHT AT THE EARTHLY REMAINS, THEY SUDDENLY FROZE AT A SPINE-CHILLING CRY..



WHAT WAS THAT?

LISTEN!



YIII-III! GH-GHOSTS! SUPERNATURAL SPIRITS FROM BEYOND!

WH-WHAT DO YOU WANT OF US, GHOSTS?

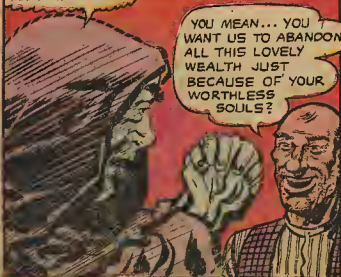
OUR SKELETONS, YOU MUST NOT DESECRATE AND DESTROY THEM OR YOU WILL IMPERIL THE IMMORTAL EXISTENCE OF OUR SOULS, RASH HUMANS!

MY ANSWER IS GET OUT!! SAVE YOUR PLEAS! WE AREN'T INTERESTED!

OUT! OUT!! WE'RE ONLY INTERESTED IN WHAT PROFITS US!

YOU'LL... RUE... YOUR... DECISION...

YOU MEAN... YOU WANT US TO ABANDON ALL THIS LOVELY WEALTH JUST BECAUSE OF YOUR WORTHLESS SOULS?



CALLoused AS SHE WAS, MATILDA COULDN'T PREVENT A TINGLE OF FOREBODDING FROM Jangling HER NERVES...

IT'S BAD LUCK TO INVITE GHOST VENGEANCE!

D-DO YOU THINK THAT MAYBE WE SHOULD?

NOT TAMPER WITH THE GOLDEN SKELETONS? ARE YOU MAD?

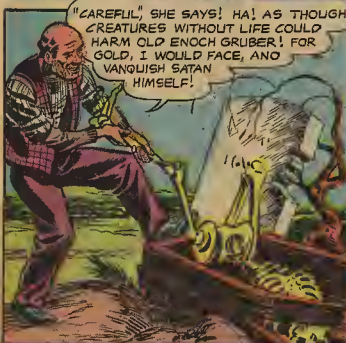
NO ONE, NOTHING, IS GOING TO ROB ME OF THIS SUDDEN WEALTH! NEITHER YOU OR ANY POWER IN HEAVEN OR HELL! THE GOLD IS MINE! I'LL NEVER LET IT GO!

WAIT HERE, MATILDA, WHILE I DRAG IN MORE OF OUR LITTLE PETS! DON'T BE AFRAID OF HELPLESS PHANTOMS! THEY WON'T HARM YOU!

B-BE CAREFUL, ENOCH! I CAN'T HELP BEING AFRAID! THEIR EYES! I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH GRIM, ABYSMAL HATRED!



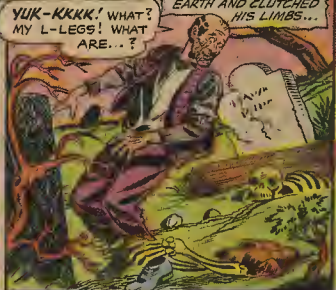
"CAREFUL," SHE SAYS! HA! AS THOUGH CREATURES WITHOUT LIFE COULD HARM OLD ENOCH GRUBER! FOR GOLD, I WOULD FACE, AND VANQUISH SATAN HIMSELF!



BUT ENOCH'S SCOFFING COMMENTS WERE SPOKEN TOO SOON! FOR SUDDENLY, BONY TALONS OF GOLD CLAWED UP OUT OF THE

EARTH AND CLUTCHED HIS LIMBS...

YUK-KKKK! WHAT? MY L-LEGS! WHAT ARE...?



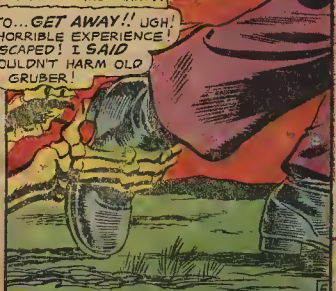
DESPERATELY, GRUBER FOUGHT TO FREE HIMSELF, BUT THE GOLDEN CLAWS HUNG ON WITH TERRIBLE MIGHT...

LEGGO! LEMME GO! ACCURSED FIENOS! TAKE YOUR BONY, ROTTING CLAWS OFF ME!

GOT TO... GET AWAY!! UGH! WHAT A HORRIBLE EXPERIENCE! BUT I ESCAPED! I SAID THEY WOULDN'T HARM OLD GRUBER!



STRAINING AND KICKING, HE FINALLY TORE LOOSE, OFF TOWARD HIS SHANTY, HE STUMBLED AND RAN...



BACK AT THE SHACK, MRS GRUBER COULDN'T ERASE A TERRIBLE PREMONITION OF DISASTER. SHE SIGHED WITH RELIEF AT THE SOUND OF KNOCKING ON THE DOOR...

IT'S ENOCH! HE'S COMING BACK! I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD STOOD BEING ALONE ANOTHER SECOND! COMING, ENOCH!

LET ME IN, MATILDA!

EEEEEE! ENOCH! OH, NNNNOOOO!!

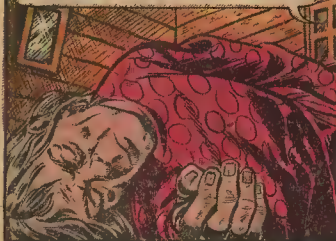


STEPPING INTO THE SHANTY, ENOCH STARED IN GRIEF AND PUZZLEMENT AT HIS WIFE'S BODY ON THE FLOOR...

DEAD... OF A HEART ATTACK! B-BUT WHY DID THE MERE SIGHT OF ME MAKE HER DIE? I-I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHY!

THEN IT WAS THAT ENOCH GRUBER SIGHTED HIS REFLECTION IN A MIRROR. THE SCREAM THAT TORE FROM HIS BONY THROAT WAS THE TORMENT OF A LOST SOUL...

YAAAAA! TH-THEY'VE CHANGED ME INTO A GOLDEN SKELETON... J-JUST L-LIKE THEM! NO! NO! NO!!

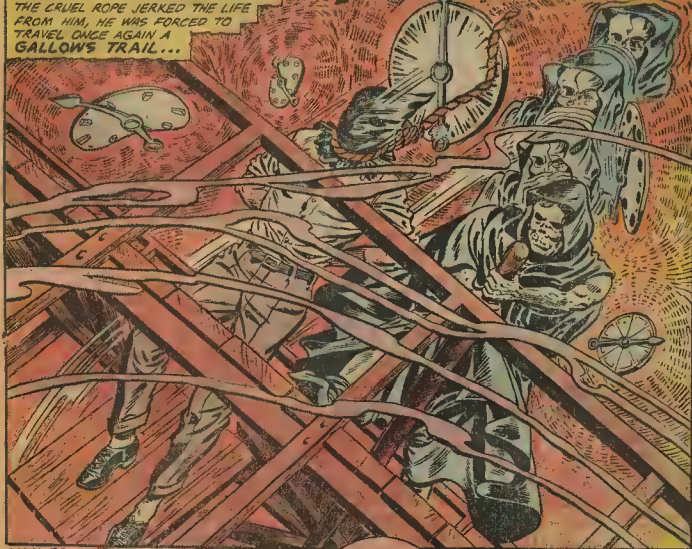


YES... GRUBER! NOW... YOU... ARE... ONE... OF... US!!

THE END

AN ORIENTAL SAGE ONCE SAID THAT ALL ETERNITY CAN BE TELESCOPED INTO A SECOND IN TIME! BETWEEN THE TIME A BOOK FALLS FROM A TABLE, AND THE TIME IT STRIKES THE FLOOR, A LIFE CAN BE LIVED! BUT IN THE CASE OF JOHN LALLY IT WAS HIS OWN BODY THAT FELL—THROUGH THE HANGMAN'S TRAPDOOR, AND IN THAT SPLIT SECOND BEFORE THE CRUEL ROPE JERKED THE LIFE FROM HIM, HE WAS FORCED TO TRAVEL ONCE AGAIN A GALLOW'S TRAIL...

ONE SECOND TO LIVE



A TRAPDOOR YAWNS AND THE BODY OF JOHN LALLY, CONVICTED MURDERER, BEGINS THE JOURNEY INTO DARKNESS...

MY L-LAST SECOND OF LIFE! IN AN INSTANT NOW THE ROPE WILL—BREAK MY NECK!

AND THEN, STRANGELY, HE FINDS HIMSELF RUNNING WILDLY DOWN A DARK CORRIDOR..

HOW ODD THIS IS! I CAN'T STOP RUNNING! AND ALL THESE DOORS—LIKE THE YEARS OF MY LIFE, ONLY I'M GOING BACKWARDS!



STRANGE MYSTERIES

AS JOHN LALLY RUNS FRANTICALLY THROUGH THE WEIRD DOORS, HE SEEM TO GROW SMALLER, YOUNGER...



I—I AM GROWING YOUNGER! I'M TURNING INTO A CHILD AGAIN—GOING BACK IN TIME! BUT WHERE WILL IT ALL END?

UNTIL AT LAST HE IS RUNNING ACROSS A LONG, DARK PLAIN...

M—MY HOUSE! BUT IT'S SO DARK AND I'M FRIGHTENED! HOW DID I EVER GET WAY OUT HERE, AWAY FROM MY NICE WARM BED?



HOW FUNNY EVERYTHING LOOKS! BUT AT LEAST I'M HOME AGAIN, I'M SAFE! MAYBE FATHER WILL NEVER KNOW THAT I'VE BEEN OUT OF THE HOUSE! MAYBE HE WON'T TELL MOTHER!



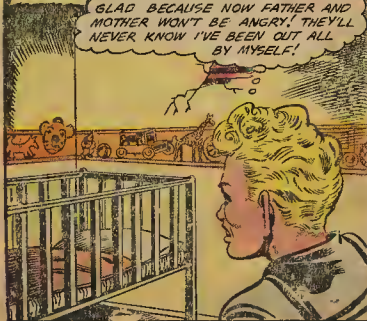
MAYBE FATHER WILL EVEN TELL ME A BEDTIME STORY—A NICE ONE WITH NO SCAREY THINGS IN IT! I HATE SCAREY STORIES!

AND UP A WINDING STAIR CASE INTO THE SHADOWS...



UNTIL FINALLY...

NOBODY SAW ME COME IN! I'M GLAD BECAUSE NOW FATHER AND MOTHER WON'T BE ANGRY! THEY'LL NEVER KNOW I'VE BEEN OUT ALL BY MYSELF!



HE IS SAFE WITH THE COVERS OVER HIS HEAD...

I'M STILL SCARED, THOUGH! IF ONLY FATHER AND MOTHER WOULD COME IN AND KISS ME GOOD-NIGHT, AND TELL ME A STORY!



LATER, AS HIS TREMBLING SUBSIDES...

HERE THEY COME NOW!
BUT THEY'RE SO QUIET—
NOT TALKING AT ALL!
AND IT'S SO DARK I
CAN HARDLY SEE
THEM!

BUT YOUNG JOHN LALLY
IS SEEING THE FIRST ACT
OF A TERRIBLE LITTLE
DRAMA: IN THE DARKNESS
THE FACES OF THE PLAYERS
LOOK LIKE BLANK MASKS...

I TELL YOU IT HAS GOT TO
STOP! I SIMPLY WON'T
STAND FOR IT! I'LL TAKE
MY CHILD
AND LEAVE!

QUIET, YOU
NAGGING FOOL!
DO YOU WANT
TO WAKE HIM?
SPEAK SOFTLY
LIKE ME!

I KNOW—THEY'RE PLAYING A
GAME WITH ME! BUT I'LL FOOL
THEM AND PRETEND TO BE
ASLEEP! THIS IS FUN!

AND IN THE AWFUL
WHISPERING THERE
IS AN UNDERCURRENT
OF HORROR FOR EVEN
A CHILD OF FOUR...

T-THAT'S
MOTHER ALL
RIGHT, BUT WHO
IS THE MAN? I
K-KNOW FATHER
WOULDN'T FIGHT
WITH MOTHER
LIKE THAT!

THEN, IN THE MOONLIGHT,
HE SEES A RING FLASH
WICKEDLY FOR AN INSTANT
AND HEARS A DEATH
SCREAM...

FROZEN WITH DREAD,
HE WAITS UNTIL A
SILENT, BLANK-FACED
FIGURE GLIDES
FROM THE ROOM,
THEN...

MOTHER!
THAT MAN
HURT MY
MOTHER!
HE HIT HER
AND WENT
AWAY! I—I
WANT MY—
(SOB)—
FATHER!
BOO—
HOO—
HOO!

MOMENTS
LATER...

FATHER!
FATHER!
COME QUICK!
MAKE MOTHER
TALK TO ME!
A BAD MAN
WAS HERE
AND HIT HER
AND NOW
SHE WON'T
TALK! F!

GOOD
HEAVEN!
OID YOU
SEE WHO
THE MAN
WAS, JOHN?
YOU MUST
TRY TO
THINK!

NO—EEEEEEEEEE—



LATER THE POLICE TALK TO YOUNG JOHN LALLY, TO NO AVAIL...

ARE YOU SURE YOU TOLD US ALL YOU CAN REMEMBER, SON? YOU COULDN'T SEE THE MAN'S FACE, OR RECOGNIZE HIS VOICE?

IT WAS DARK AND I WAS SCARED! HE WAS A BAD MAN—AND I WANT MY MUVVER! I'M AFRAID WITHOUT MY MUVVER!

AFRAID IT'S NO USE, DAN! THE KID WAS TOO FRIGHTENED TO REMEMBER ANYTHING! AND THE RING MARK HASN'T HELPED ANY!

MONTHS PASS AND ONE DAY... WE'RE NOT REALLY GIVING UP, SIR, BUT IT LOOKS PRETTY HOPELESS! WHOEVER KILLED YOUR WIFE SEEMS TO HAVE GOTTEN AWAY WITH IT. IF THE BOY COULD ONLY REMEMBER... OR IF WE COULD FIND THAT RING!

IN A WAY I'M GLAD THAT HE CAN'T! THANK GOODNESS HE WAS YOUNG ENOUGH SO THIS WON'T RUIN HIS WHOLE LIFE! HE'LL FORGET IN TIME!

SO THE YEARS PASS AND JOHN LALLY DOES NOT FORGET, AND ALSO GOES AWAY TO SCHOOL...

WELL, JOHN, HAVE A GOOD TIME AT SCHOOL AND DON'T FORGET TO STUDY HARD! WRITE ME OFTEN!

I WILL, DAD! I PROMISE I WILL! I'LL MAKE YOU PROUD OF ME!

WHERE HE BECOMES A HAPPY AND NATURAL YOUNG MAN...

I DID IT! IN THE LAST SECOND—AND WE WIN!

THE BEST HALF-BACK THE OLD SCHOOL EVER HAD!

H'RAY FOR LALLY!

UNTIL, WITH HIS FATHER IN EUROPE ON BUSINESS, JOHN SPENDS SOME TIME AT THE OLD FAMILY HOME! ONE NIGHT...

W-WHAT'S THAT? I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMEONE CALLING MY NAME FROM OUTSIDE THE WINDOW! BUT IT CAN'T BE...

BUT THERE IS SOMETHING THERE...

MOTHER! YOU—YOU'VE COME BACK! OH, MOTHER!

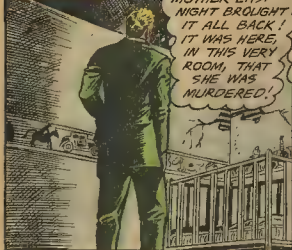
EYOWWWWW— I MUST HAVE JUSTICE MY SON! YOU MUST HELP ME! OWWWWW—

JOHN LALLY SLEEPS NO MORE THAT NIGHT! AND THE NEXT DAY HE VISITS HIS OLD NURSERY...

I—I HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN, BUT SEEING THE GHOST OF MOTHER LAST NIGHT BROUGHT IT ALL BACK! IT WAS HERE, IN THIS VERY ROOM, THAT SHE WAS MURDERED!

IF ONLY I HADN'T BEEN SO SMALL, SO ARIGHTEENED, ON THAT TERRIBLE NIGHT! IF I COULD HAVE SEEN THE MAN'S FACE, OR RECOGNIZED HIS VOICE! THE POLICE FINALLY SAID IT WAS A PASSING STRANGER—BUT WHAT WOULD A STRANGER BE DOING IN MY NURSERY WITH MOTHER?

BUT ONE THING I'LL NEVER FORGET! THAT RING—I SAW IT FOR A MOMENT IN THE MOONLIGHT, AND I'LL NEVER FORGET IT—NEVER!



THAT NIGHT HE IS AGAIN AWAKENED BY A PRESENCE IN THE ROOM...

NO, MY SON, NOT UNTIL YOU HAVE AVENGED ME! BUT THERE IS MUCH I MUST TELL YOU!

MOTHER! Y-YOU AGAIN! CAN'T YOU REST IN YOUR GRAVE, MOTHER?



I COULD TELL YOU THE NAME OF MY MURDERER, MY SON. BUT IT IS BETTER THAT YOU FIND IT OUT FOR YOURSELF! I HAVE WAITED UNTIL YOU WERE OLD ENOUGH TO SEE JUSTICE DONE!

BUT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, MOTHER! HOW AM I TO FIND THIS PERSON?



FIND THE RING! THE RING THAT MADE THIS MARK—AND YOU WILL FIND THE MURDERER! GOODBYE, MY SON! DO NOT FAIL ME!

I PROMISE, MOTHER! I WON'T REST UNTIL YOU ARE AVENGED! I PROMISE!



I'LL START THE SEARCH IN THE MORNING! THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO FIND THAT RING, AND THE KILLER, EVEN AFTER ALL THIS TIME.





SO BEGAN JOHN LALLY'S GREAT SEARCH! FOLLOWING EVERY POSSIBLE CLUE, SCOURING THE WORLD, HE SPENDS THE NEXT TWO YEARS SEARCHING FOR A RING THAT DOES NOT SEEM TO EXIST...

UNTIL AT LAST, WITH EMPTY HANDS, HE RETURNS ONCE TO HIS HOME...

LOOKS LIKE YOU JUST GOT BACK IN TIME, MR. LALLY! I HEAR YOUR DAD IS GETTING MARRIED TOMORROW!

YES! I'LL BE JUST IN TIME FOR THE WEDDING!



GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK, JOHN! THIS IS NANCY, THE WOMAN I'M GOING TO MARRY!

I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING YOU, JOHN! I DO HOPE WE'LL LIKE EACH OTHER!

I'M SURE WE WILL!



SO YOU SEE, DAD, I'VE FAILED! I'VE LOOKED ALL OVER THE WORLD FOR THAT BLASTED RING AND THE MAN WHO WORE IT! I PROMISED MOTHER'S GHOST...

SO YOU STILL BELIEVE YOU REALLY SAW A GHOST, SON?

HMMM—I DIDN'T WANT TO SEEM SKEPTICAL THEN, BUT NOW THAT YOU'RE A LITTLE OLDER, WE CAN SPEAK FRANKLY!



THERE WAS NO GHOST, MY BOY, ONLY YOUR IMAGINATION! I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU FORGOT THIS BUSINESS AND SETTLED DOWN! I LOVED YOUR MOTHER, TOO—BUT WELL, THE DEAD ARE DEAD!

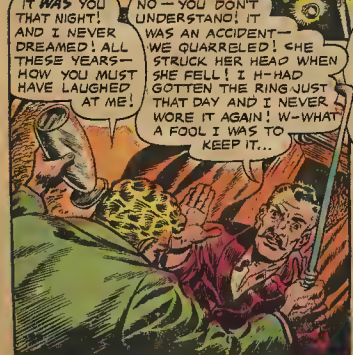
SORRY I CAN'T AGREE WITH YOU, DAD! I KNOW I SAW MOTHER'S GHOST—AND I'M GOING TO CONTINUE THE SEARCH FOR THE RING!

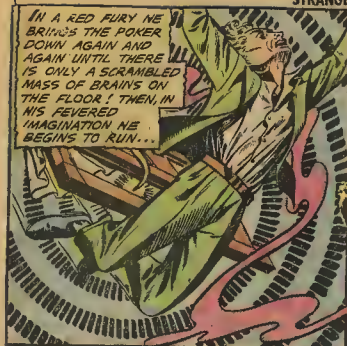
VERY WELL! IF YOU—(SIGH)—MUST, YOU MUST! GOOD LUCK!





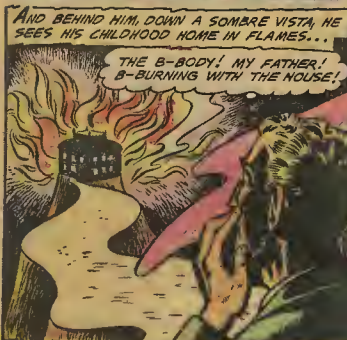
AND THEN JOHN LALLY IS TRANSFIXED BY SURPRISE AND HORROR! THERE, SHINING UP AT HIM IS...





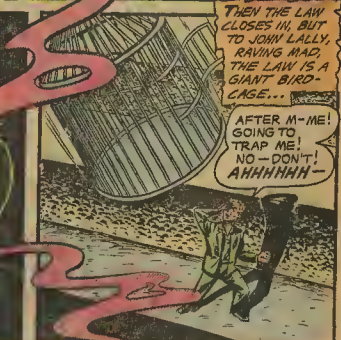
IN A RED FURY HE BRINGS THE POKER DOWN AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL THERE IS ONLY A SCRAMBLED MASS OF BRAINS ON THE FLOOR! THEN, IN HIS FEVERED IMAGINATION HE BEGINS TO RUN...

THROUGH A DARK WOOD WHERE THE TREES ARE BLACK WITCHES, AND REACH FOR HIM WITH GAUNT HANDS, SHRIEKING BEDLAM AT HIS TIRED BRAIN...



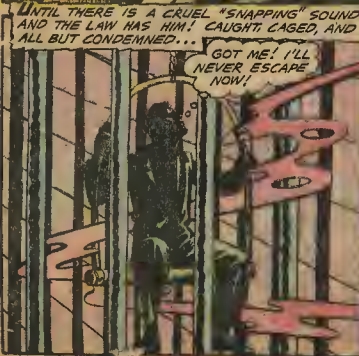
AND BEHIND HIM, DOWN A SOMBER VISTA, HE SEES HIS CHILDHOOD HOME IN FLAMES...

THE B-BODY! MY FATHER! B-BURNING WITH THE HOUSE!



THEN THE LAW CLOSES IN, BUT TO JOHN LALLY, RAVING MAD, THE LAW IS A GIANT BIRD-CAGE...

AFTER M-ME! GOING TO TRAP ME! NO-DON'T! AHHHHHH-



UNTIL THERE IS A CRUEL "SNAPPING" SOUND AND THE LAW HAS HIM! CAUGHT, CAGED, AND ALL BUT CONDEMNED...

GOT ME! I'LL NEVER ESCAPE NOW!



AND THE HAND OF THE LAW REACHES INTO THE CAGE FOR HIM...

NO! EEEEEEE-

C'MON, YOU MURDERER! TIME TO STAND YOUR TRIAL!

STRANGE MYSTERIES

FROM THE VERY FIRST THERE WAS NO HOPE FOR JOHN LALLY! HE MADE NO EFFORT TO ESCAPE THE PENALTY FOR MURDER! SO CAME THE DAY...

BUT SUDDENLY THERE COMES AN IMPULSE THAT HE CANNOT RESIST...

YOU HAVE BEEN FOUND GUILTY, JOHN LALLY! YOU WILL THEREFORE BE HANGED BY THE NECK UNTIL DEAD! AND MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON YOUR SOUL!

YES! THE SENTENCE IS FAIR! I WANT TO DIE!

BUT I'LL DIE IN MY OWN WAY! THIS WAY IS QUICKER!

STOP HIM!

HE'S TRYING TO CHEAT THE GALLOWS!

INSTEAD OF FALLING HE FINDS HIMSELF ON A GREAT SLIDE, GOING DOWN AND DOWN AND DOWN...

AHHH—I'M AFRAID! I CAN'T STOP! HELP ME, SOMEONE! MOTHER—MOTHER—MOTHER!

OH H H H H H H H H—FALLING AGAIN! FATHER—FATHER—FATHER! I'M SORRY, FATHER! HELP ME—HELP ME!

AND THOSE WERE THE THOUGHTS OF JOHN LALLY IN THE LAST SECOND OF HIS LIFE...

IN AN INSTANT NOW THE ROPE WILL UNNNN!

SNAP!
CRUNCH!

LATER, AS THE PRISON DOCTOR AND A FRIEND LEAVE THE GRIM BUILDING...

WELL, HE DIED QUICKLY! COULDN'T HAVE FELT ANYTHING MUCH!

YES, BUT THE EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE! I WONDER WHAT HE WAS THINKING IN THAT LAST SECOND?

The End

FATAL PROOF

By JOHN MARTIN

IN STEPHAN CRAWD'S eyes was a fire seen many times in this world. It once burned in the orbs of the minions of the Spanish Inquisition. Rome had seen it in the persecutions of the Christians.

It was not a mad fire for all its flaming, erratic heat.

It was the fire of fanaticism.

Now it was mixed with the fierce, tearing light of pleasure. He got out of his car, walked up the steps of the dingy old brownstone house in the slum area, sneered at the sign on the front that said: The Golden School of the Occult.

Inside, he knew, somewhere in that sagging, ancient ruinous house was Hawker Tine. His lips curled again in a sneer as he thought of Tine—Tine, the quack; Tine, the spiritualist fraud. He had spent years trying to ruin Tine. And now he had in his hands the weapon which would serve to smash him.

He thought, as he rang the doorbell, of the other quacks, the other spiritualist frauds he had exposed, ruined in a long career of ghost-breaking. Every one of them, no matter what their claims, had failed in the end. He had shown them up. No one knew better than he, Stephan Crawd, what a fake the supernatural was.

Yet, his heart pounded and an uneasy twinge of fear shot through him as he heard footsteps approaching the door. Tine was different. Tine had proved nothing, but his confidence, high for many years, was unbounded, a fanaticism as burning as Crawd's own.

Then the door opened.

"Mr. Tine?" the attendant asked. "Yes, you can see him. I believe he's expecting you."

Expecting him? Crawd's blood chilled as he led up a sagging flight of steps and down a corridor. How could Tine have known he was coming?

THE DOOR swung open. The attendant glided away.

"Come in, Mr. Crawd," A deep voice said.

Uncertainly, shaken, the ghost-breaker walked into the room. It was plainly furnished. It didn't look at all like the regulation spiritualist layout. No gaudy hangings. No crystal ball. No seance table.

The tall, gaunt man behind the desk, dressed in the shabby tweeds, smiled faintly. He indicated a chair.

"I've expected you for many years, Mr. Crawd," Tine said. "Sooner or later I knew . . ."

"Sooner or later I catch up with all frauds, Mr. Tine," Crawd said sarcastically.

"You're sure I'm one?" Tine said, traces of a smile on his face.

"Certain." Crawd also smiled. "The supernatural does not exist. There are no hidden powers, no magics. Only live, animate things exist. But we both know this, don't we, Tine?"

Tine sat back in his chair and shook his head.

"There are frauds, Mr. Crawd. I am not one of them; true I cannot prove it, yet. By tonight, perhaps. Tonight I shall have finished my book proving my theories."

Crawd gazed at him.

"Why do you call this school of the occult—this musty rat hole, shall we say?—The Golden School?" he asked.

"Because the truths about the supernatural which I have discovered can save mankind," Tine remarked. "There is bad magic; there is also good magic. Good magic, the good powers of the supernatural, shall lend wings to man, usher in a new Golden Age. That is why I call it the Golden School." Again the ghostly smile hovered on his lips. "I—I have gone so far as to anticipate fame, Mr. Crawd. I am writing the manuscript of my book in golden, metallic ink. I am sure that one day my fame. . ."

"Your fame does not interest me, Mr. Tine, only your notoriety," Crawd interrupted. "Come, now, I like you. You're an opponent worthy of my steel. Give up this fraud, get out of the state, promise to earn an honest living. Stop deceiving people, stop defrauding them of money." He inclined his head. "Give me your word to end all this . . ." He compassed the house with his hands, ". . . and I'll call off the police."

"The police?" Tine smiled wearily now. "It is not against the law to conduct spiritualist investigations."

Crawd sighed.

"I thought you would see reason," he said. "True, it might be difficult to convict you in court of anything worse than mere

thinking. Mind you, it could be done. but it would be expensive."

AGAIN he sighed. "Well, that was only one of my moves in this little chess game, Mr. Tine."

"And the other?"

"Your money, your life is sunk in this school," Cawd began craftily, "You have applied for a loan to continue it." He paused and chuckled as, for the first time, a hint of fear crept into Tine's eyes. "Should you lose it, should you lose this building, a whole lifetime of toil will have been wasted. You could not start again. You would sink into oblivion. Wouldn't you, Tine?"

Tine's head drooped.

"That is true," he said. "But you can't . . ."

Cawd rose.

"But I can. I gave you the opportunity, Tine, to withdraw gracefully, silently, Now you will go down with a loud, public crash." He glanced triumphantly at the other. "I knew of this loan. A man of my standing, Tine, has many friends. For instance the president of the bank you . . ."

Tine's face was white; suddenly his gauntness was the haggard lines of a corpse's face.

"But you can't, Cawd! That loan was my only chance. No other bank would touch it." His look became suffused with hatred.

Cawd paused at the door.

"I swore to destroy you, Tine, and I have! You're through!"

Tine sank back in his chair, a picture of hopelessness.

Cawd slammed the door behind him, the sound echoing hollowly through the old house. Once more his blood seemed to chill unaccountably. He hurried down to his car. A cold hand seemed to clutch at his heart. Somehow Tine's eyes, the memory of the bottomless defeat they contained, now, took away the savor of triumph.

Next morning, at his mid-town office, the phone rang.

"The police," his secretary said, coming into the inner office. "They said Hawker Tine committed suicide last night!"

Cawd paused in the act of lighting his pipe. Beneath him the floor seemed to rock. His face paled to a dirty gray, trembling.

"What—what if he did?" he asked. "I have no further business with Tine . . ."

"They're sending a police officer over with a book Tine was found with. A note on it said it was for you."

Cawd turned away slowly.

HIS SECRETARY watched him curiously as she left for her desk. She had never seen Cawd as shaken as this before. Twenty minutes later a police officer knocked at the outer office door, handed her a book for Cawd. She opened it curiously as the policeman left. It was a large manuscript, bound in a spring folder. And it was entirely written in gold lettering. On the cover was written: Proof of the Supernatural—by Hawker Tine.

"Give it to me!" Cawd stood in the doorway. He was pale as death. She handed him the book.

"An odd object, Mr. Cawd. Poor Tine. Just another fraud!"

"Just—another—fraud," he said slowly. "Miss Timmins, I don't want to be disturbed. I'm going to read this book, and take notes as I read. You can transcribe them later. They'll be useful in my latest expose on spiritualism and like swindles."

Miss Timmins returned to her desk. She glanced at the clock that said ten and continued work on Cawd's correspondence.

At noon Cawd had still not reappeared. She could hear him move uneasily in his chair occasionally. She got up to go out to lunch, started to put on her hat.

The sudden, choked shriek made her drop it. Then the low gasping noises drew her to the inner office like a magnet. She burst open the door, paused, her own blood turning to ice.

Cawd was dead. She could see that at a glance. He lay back, his face black, throttled in his chair. Before him the manuscript book lay closed. Beside it were some notes in his own handwriting. They read: "True, all true! Tine was right! He's proved it in this book. The supernatural does exist!"

Miss Timmins' lips curled. Even a nutshell skeptic like Cawd eventually cracked, she thought. But she wouldn't. The supernatural indeed! Incantations, spirits, chairs moving through space—all nonsense!

But what had killed him? The thought jerked her eyes downward. Miss Timmins swayed as she opened the manuscript book. Its pages were blank, now. Her eyes jerked toward Cawd. Her mind reeled before she fell in a dead faint before the awful, blasting fact.

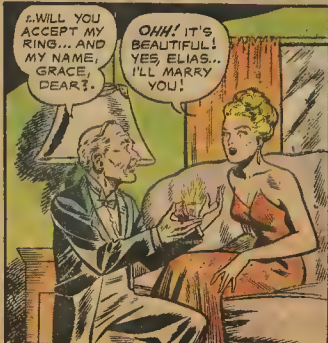
Before her dimming, horrified eyes, she saw the metallic script letters of Tine's revengeful book that had crawled out of their pages and wound themselves into a death-dealing noose round the neck of Stephan. Cawd!

NO ESCAPE from EVIL



IF YOU DESIRE SOMETHING WITH ALL YOUR HEART, CHANCES ARE YOU'LL EVENTUALLY REALIZE IT... BUT IT'S A RISK, FOR YOU COULD RECEIVE A MOST UNEXPECTED BONUS FOR YOUR PERSISTENCE... AND IF IT WAS HALF AS HORRIBLE AS GRACE CLAYTON'S SURPRISE, WE'D ADVISE YOU TO FORGET IT!

ELIAS CLAYTON WAS OLD, UGLY AND REPULSIVE—BUT GRACE WAS WILLING TO OVERLOOK ALL THIS BECAUSE SHE SAW HIM ONLY AS A MEANS TO FULFILL HER ONE DESIRE... WEALTH...



"WILL YOU ACCEPT MY RING... AND MY NAME, GRACE, DEAR?"

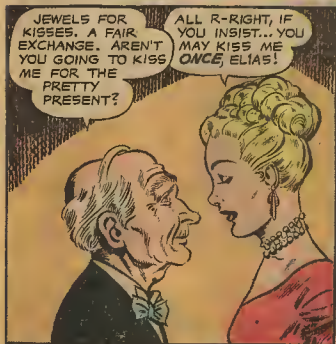
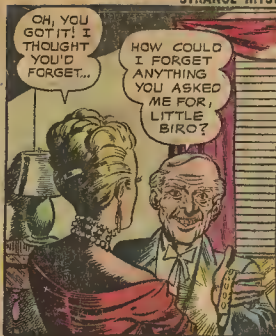
"OHH! IT'S BEAUTIFUL! YES, ELIAS... I'LL MARRY YOU!"



"YOU LIKE IT, EH, MY PRETTY?"

"LOVELY! UGLY OLD GOAT! I CAN'T STAND LOOKING AT HIM... BUT IT'S WORTH IT..."

AND SO THE TWO WERE MARRIED... GRACE'S DEMANDS INCREASED EACH DAY... BUT ELIAS DIDN'T SEEM TO MIND... IN FACT, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT IT PLEASED HIM TO MAKE HER HAPPY...

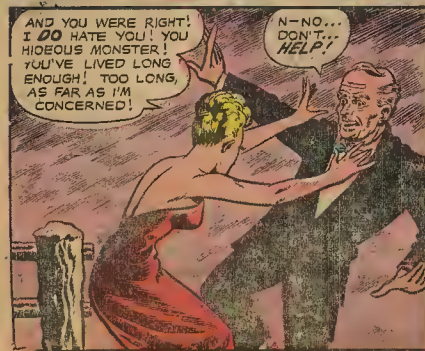
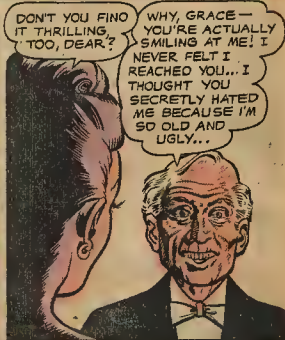
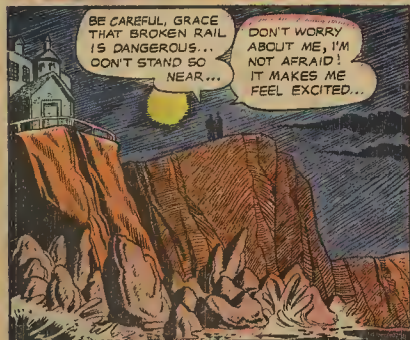
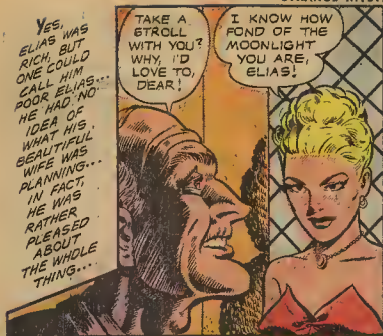


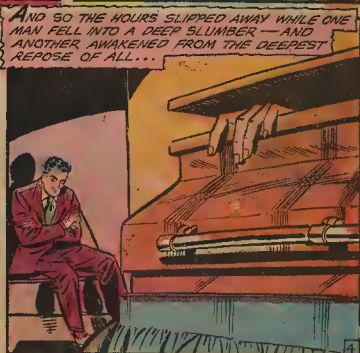
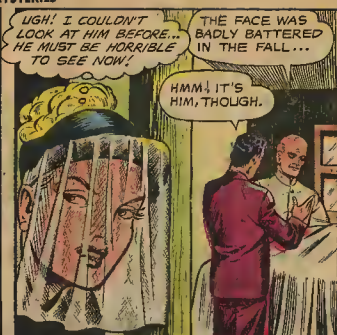
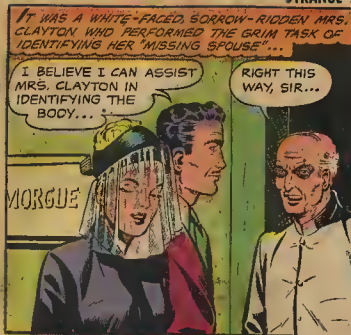
ELIAS' KISSES MADE GRACE SHIVER WITH REPULSION; BUT IT WAS A SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR HER GAINS... AND BESIDES, CHARLIE'S KISSES HAD A MUCH SWEETER FLAVOR... AS THEY SAY OF STOLEN SWEETS...

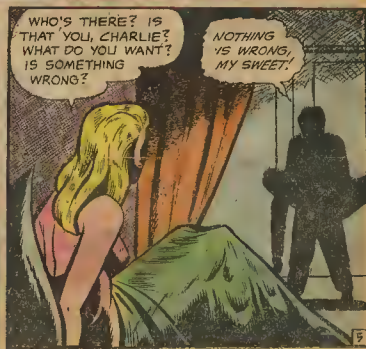
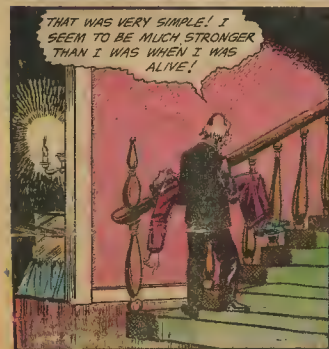
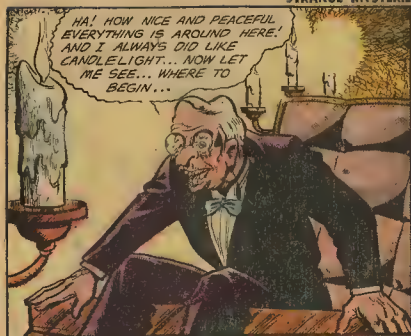


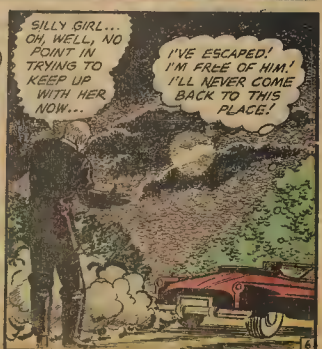
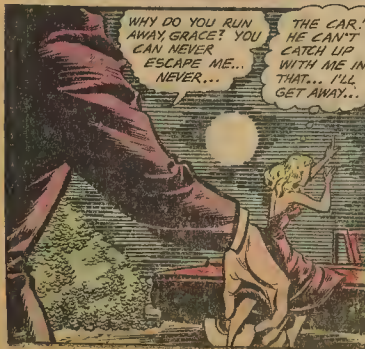
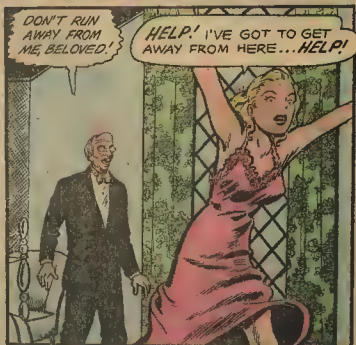
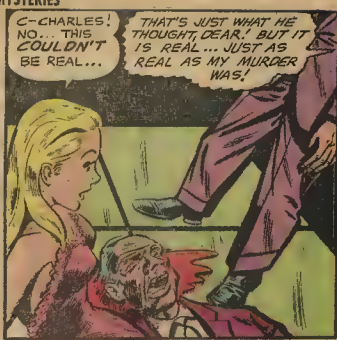
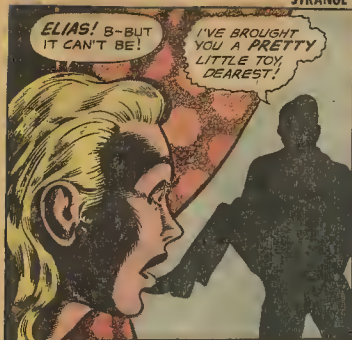
...EXCEPT THAT I FINALLY FIGURED IT OUT! ELIAS CLAYTON IS GOING TO MEET WITH A FATAL ACCIDENT... VERY, VERY SOON!



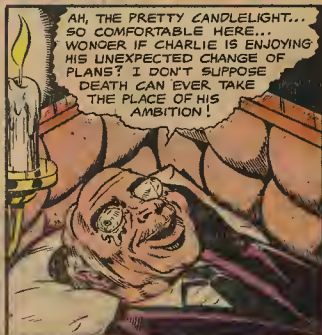
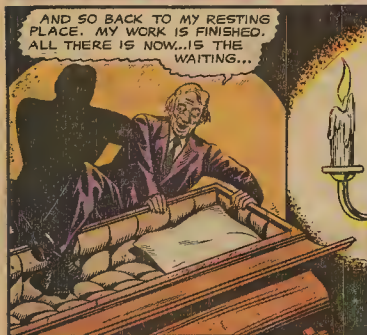
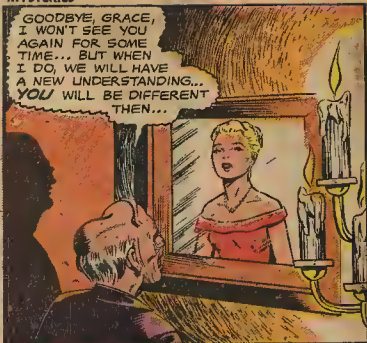
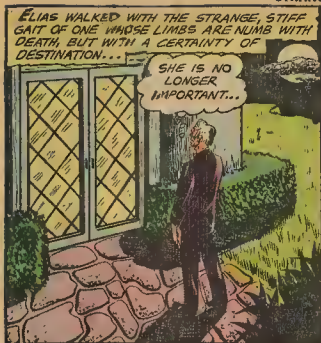


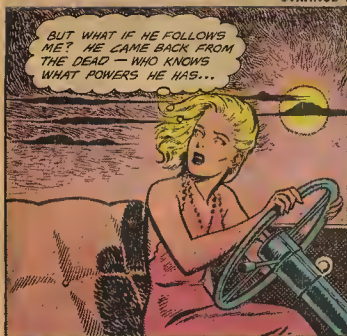






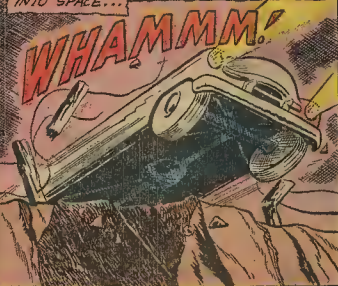
STRANGE MYSTERIES





GRACE, THE GIRL WHO HATED UGLY THINGS WAS NOW FACING SOMETHING MORE FEARFUL THAN ANYTHING SHE HAD EVER DREAMED OF... HER OWN DESTRUCTION...

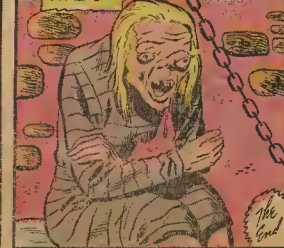
JUST AS POOR ELIAS WENT OVER A CLIFF TO THE ROCKS BELOW, HIS AMBITIOUS YOUNG WIFE WAS FOLLOWING SUIT... WITH A SCREAM OF SPEED THE CAR PLUNGED OFF INTO SPACE...



BUT THERE WAS MORE TO THE STORY... ELIAS HAD A FINE, DIGNIFIED FUNERAL. IN FACT, SO DID CHARLIE. ODDLY ENOUGH, GRACE DID NOT DIE, BUT NATURALLY SHE WAS CONVICTED OF MURDERING HER LOVER... FOR WHO WOULD BELIEVE HER WILD PRANTING OF INNOCENCE?

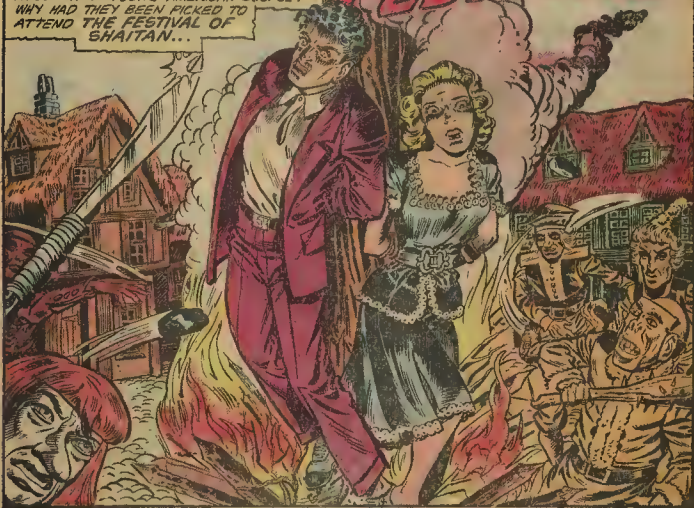


GRACE LIVED... OF COURSE, IT REALLY WASN'T THE KIND OF LIFE THAT SHE HAD GONE TO SUCH TROUBLE TO ACQUIRE... BUT THEN SHE HAD NICE LONG HOURS TO SIT AND DREAM ABOUT THE EXCITING PAST, AND THERE WAS NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE FUTURE... THAT WAS ALL QUITE TAKEN CARE OF!



THE ROAD-MAPS DIDN'T SHOW IT, NO GUIDE-BOOK LISTED IT, NOBODY SEEMED TO HAVE HEARD OF IT! YET THERE IT WAS, THIS STRANGE VILLAGE STANDING AMIDST THE DARK BLACK MISTS DRIFTING DOWN FROM THE LOFTY BAVARIAN ALPS! SCREAMS SHATTERED THE MIDNIGHT AIR, AND THERE WAS THE SICKLY STENCH OF ROASTING FLESH... AND DEEDS SO HORRIBLE THAT THEY MUST REMAIN FOREVER UNTOLD! WHAT NIGHTMARE TRAP HAD CLOSED ABOUT THIS YOUNG AMERICAN COUPLE? WHY HAD THEY BEEN PICKED TO ATTEND THE FESTIVAL OF SHAITAN...

DEVIL'S FESTIVAL



PAUL AND WENDY BARRET RETURN TO THE SCENE OF THEIR HONEYMOON TEN YEARS BEFORE...

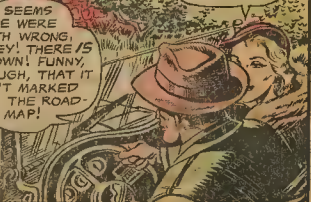
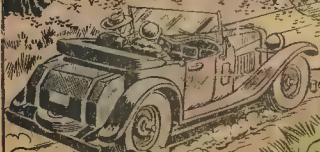
THAT BREAKDOWN HAS RUINED OUR SCHEDULE, WENDY! I DON'T SEE HOW WE CAN MAKE INNSBRUCK TONIGHT!

BUT WE MUST, DARLING! THERE'S NO OTHER PLACE TO STOP!

BUT A FEW MINUTES LATER, A STRANGE THING OCCURS...

HOW ODD! I—I DON'T REMEMBER ANY TOWN BEING HERE, AND YOU KNOW THAT I HAVE A GOOD MEMORY! BUT AT LEAST WE CAN GET LODGING FOR THE NIGHT!

SEEMS WE WERE BOTH WRONG, HONEY! THERE IS A TOWN! FUNNY, THOUGH, THAT IT ISN'T MARKED ON THE ROAD-MAP!



THIS IS ALL VERY PECULIAR, WENDY! I DIDN'T KNOW THEY STILL LOCKED THE GATES ON THESE OLD TOWNS AT NIGHT!

LOOK—THE GATE IS OPENING NOW!



ENTER THEN! BUT AS FOR INNS, I DO NOT KNOW! TONIGHT IS THE FESTIVAL OF SHAITAN AND THE INNS WILL ALL BE CROWDED!

A FESTIVAL! SO THAT'S IT—EXPLAINS WHY YOU'RE WEARING THAT UGLY-LOOKING MASK!

UGH—IT IS HORRIBLE-LOOKING! I WISH WE COULD DRIVE ON, PAUL!



SUDDENLY...

EEEE—PAUL! L—LOOK OVER THERE! HOW HORRIBLE!

GOOD GRIEF! B—BUT WAIT A MINUTE—IT MUST BE PART OF THE FESTIVAL, WENDY! THOSE THINGS MUST BE DUMMIES, EFFIGIES! THEY MUST BE!



WHAT DO YOU WANT, STRANGERS? IT IS LATE—AND WE CLOSE THE GATES OF WALPURGEN AT SUNDOWN!

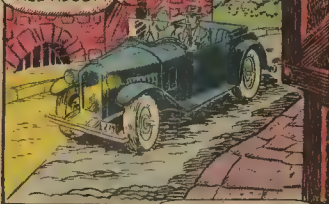
WALPURGEN? SO THAT'S THE NAME OF THIS BURG? WE WOULD LIKE TO STAY HERE OVERNIGHT! CAN YOU DIRECT US TO A GOOD INN?



MINUTES LATER...

I STILL THINK THIS IS A FUNNY TIME OF YEAR FOR A FESTIVAL! THE FESTIVAL OF SHAITAN? WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE IT'S ALL ABOUT?

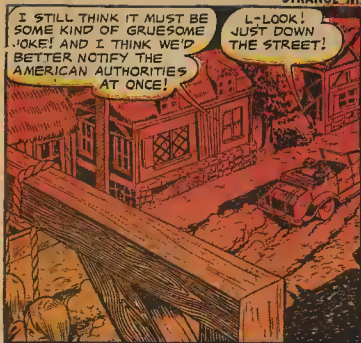
HMM—THE WORD SHAITAN MEANS SOMETHING TO ME, BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER JUST NOW! BUT WHERE IS THAT BLASTED INN?



P—PAUL! THEY—THEY'RE **NOT** DUMMIES! THEY'RE REAL! D—DEAD PEOPLE, HANGED IN PUBLIC!

Y—YES! BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS AT ALL! PUBLIC EXECUTIONS ARE AGAINST THE LAW THESE DAYS! AND THIS PLACE MUST BE IN THE AMERICAN ZONE, TOO! IT'S INCREDIBLE!





I STILL THINK IT MUST BE SOME KIND OF GRUESOME JOKE! AND I THINK WE'D BETTER NOTIFY THE AMERICAN AUTHORITIES AT ONCE!

L-LOOK! JUST DOWN THE STREET!



GREAT SCOTT! AN OLD WOMAN IN A CAGE! LOOKS LIKE SHE'S BEEN T-TORTURED! MAYBE WE CAN DO SOMETHING HORRIBLE! TO HELP HER!

L-LISTEN, SHE'S TRYING TO TELL US SOMETHING!



BEWARE, STRANGERS! FLEE FOR YOUR LIVES! IF THEY CATCH YOU, THEY'LL PUT YOU IN A CAGE, TOO! YOU'LL—(CHUCKLE)—BE JUST LIKE ME!

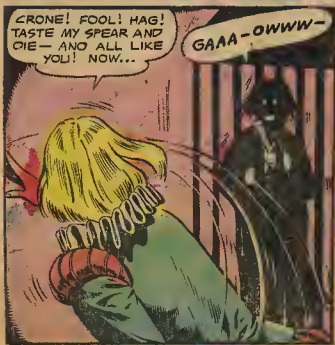


QUIET, OLD HAG! YOU TALK TOO MUCH! I THINK YOU HAVE LIVED TOO LONG ANYWAY! SO NOW I'LL PUT AN END TO YOU!

THAT MAN! HE'S GOING TO KILL HER!

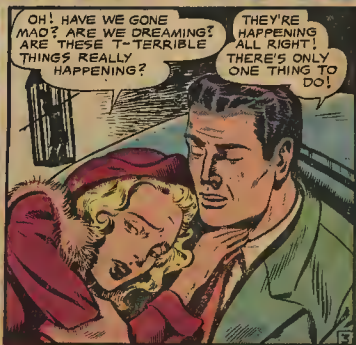
NO—PLEASE!

STOP!



CRONE! FOOL! HAG! TASTE MY SPEAR AND DIE—AND ALL LIKE YOU! NOW...

GAAA—OWWW—



OH! HAVE WE GONE MAD? ARE WE DREAMING? ARE THESE T-TERRIBLE THINGS REALLY HAPPENING?

THEY'RE HAPPENING ALL RIGHT! THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO!

STRANGE MYSTERIES

ONE THING BOTH PAUL AND WENDY KNOW — THEY MUST GET OUT OF THIS WEIRD VILLAGE AT ONCE...

"WE'RE LEAVING THIS CREEPY PLACE RIGHT NOW! I'VE GOT A HUNCH SOMETHING IS TERRIBLY WRONG AROUND HERE!"

YES! I'VE GOT THE SHUDDOERS! ANYTHING IS BETTER THAN STAYING!

TONIGHT! NOBODY IS PERMITTED TO LEAVE UNTIL DAWN!

HALT! YOU MUST REMAIN IN WALPURGEN

B-BUT YOU CAN'T DO THIS! WE'RE AMERICANS! YOU CAN'T FORCE US TO STAY IN THIS PLACE!

M-MAYBE THERE IS ANOTHER WAY OUT, PAUL!

LATER AS THE PUZZLED AND FEARFUL COUPLE FIND AN INN AT LAST...

THE HOST, WHEN HE APPEARS, DOES NOTHING TO PUT THEIR FEARS AT REST...

HA-HA-HA! THERE IS NO OTHER WAY OUT! AND WHAT ARE AMERICANS? I NEVER HEARD OF YOU!

NEVER HEARD OF AMERICANS? HAS EVERYBODY IN THIS TOWN GONE CRAZY?

MAYBE WE CAN GET A ROOM HERE, SINCE IT APPEARS WE'RE DOOMED TO SPEND THE NIGHT IN THIS BLASTED TOWN!

IMAGINE THAT CHARACTER—NEVER HEARD OF AMERICANS!

WE BETTER GO! I DON'T LIKE HIS LOOKS!

A ROOM FOR THE NIGHT, EH? YOU ARE FORTUNATE, STRANGERS! I HAVE ONE ROOM LEFT—JUST ONE! THE INN IS ALWAYS CROWDED FOR SHAITAN'S FESTIVAL!

UGH—HE IS A HORROR, TOO! AND MUST THEY ALL WEAR THOSE DREADFUL COSTUMES? THE FESTIVAL CAN'T BE THAT IMPORTANT!

I'M BEGINNING TO GET REALLY FRIGHTENED NOW! THERE'S SOMETHING SINISTER IN THE VERY AIR AROUND US! OH, I WISH WE HADN'T COME!

SHAITAN? WHY CAN'T I REMEMBER WHAT THAT NAME MEANS?

REST WELL, STRANGERS AND—(CHUCKLE)—PLEASANT DREAMS! AND, IF YOU WILL TAKE A WORD OF ADVICE, IT WILL BE SAFER TO REMAIN IN YOUR ROOM WHEN THE SCREAMING STARTS!

GOOD HEAVENS—I JUST REMEMBERED!

THE S-SCREAMING?

SHAITAN! THE DEVIL! THE SAME AS OUR SATAN! BUT THE WORD SHAITAN IS ARABIC, MOSLEM! W-WHY WOULD A VILLAGE IN THE BAVARIAN ALPS BE HAVING—A DEVIL'S FESTIVAL?

SUDDENLY WENDY SREAMS...

PAUL, LOOK! HOW HORRIBLE! THEY SEEM TO BE TAKING THOSE POOR PEOPLE TO AN EXECUTION!

GREAT SCOTT! MAYBE THAT'S WHAT THE FAT PIG OF A LANDLORD MEANT BY THE SCREAMING!

OHH—NOW THEY'RE S—STONING THEM! BUT HOW CAN THEY BE SO CRUEL?

FIRST THOSE BODIES ON THE GALLOWS, NOW THIS! BUT PEOPLE HAVEN'T BEEN STONED TO DEATH SINCE THE MIDDLE AGES! THIS IS ALL LIKE A BAD DREAM!



THE SINISTER PROPHECY OF THE LANDLORD COMES TRUE...

STONE THE DOGS TO DEATH!

AHH—NO! AHHHHHHH—

EEEEEE—

NO! SAVE THEM FOR THE FIRE!

I CAN'T STAND THIS ANY LONGER! I'VE GOT TO STOP THAT CRAZY MOB IF I CAN! BETTER STAY HERE, WENDY!

NO! I WON'T STAY HERE ALONE! I'M GOING WITH YOU!

KILL THEM!



BUT WHAT CAN WE DO, PAUL? IF WE TRY TO INTERFERE WITH THAT MOB, THEY'LL TEAR US TO PIECES!

MAYBE, BUT I CAN'T JUST STAND ASIDE AND WATCH THOSE POOR DEVILS TORTURED LIKE THAT, NO MATTER WHAT THEY'VE DONE! I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!

HURRY! BURN THEM AT THE STAKE!

GREAT GODFREY— THEY ARE GOING TO BURN THEM AT THE STAKE! THESE PEOPLE ARE INSANE! OHH—I'M FRIGHTENED!

KILL THEM— BURN THEM!



STRANGE MYSTERIES

PAUL TRIES TO PREVENT THE HORRIBLE DEED...

STOP! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TERRIBLE THING! YOU'RE ACTING LIKE WILD ANIMALS INSTEAD OF CIVILIZED HUMAN BEINGS!

HUH! WHO ARE YOU, STRANGER, THAT YOU DARE TO INTERFERE WITH THE FESTIVAL OF SHAITAN? DO YOU ALSO WISH TO DIE?

NO—STOP! TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME! I'M AN AMERICAN CITIZEN! YOU'LL GET INTO TROUBLE FOR THIS!

SEIZE HIM! BURN HIM, TOO!

AHH—HELP! O—CON'T— PLEASE DON'T HURT US— WE MEANT NO HARM!

BURN THE WOMAN, ALSO! THE STRANGER MUST DIE FOR INTERFERING!

YES— TO THE STAKE WITH THEM, LIGHT THE FAGGOTS!

AN AMERICAN? WHAT MANNER OF FOOL IS THIS?

PAUL! T-THEY ARE GOING TO MURDER US! C-CAN THIS THING REALLY BE HAPPENING?

I GOT YOU INTO THIS, DARLING! WE'VE STUMBLERD INTO A— (GROAN)— MAD VILLAGE! THEY'RE LIKE CREATURES OUT OF THE PAST! BUT DON'T STOP HOPING!

HOPE? (HAH—HAH!) DO YOU STILL HOPE, YOU FOOLS? LOOK OVER THERE AND SEE WHAT WILL SOON HAPPEN TO YOU! LISTEN TO THE SCREAMING!

YOU FIENDS! YOU'RE BURNING THEM ALIVE!

I CAN'T LOOK!

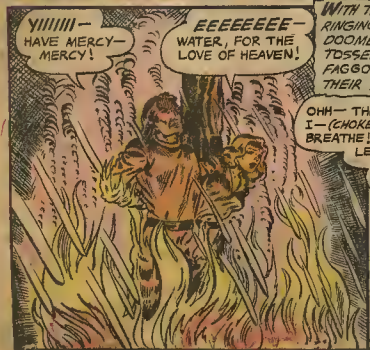
LET'S PRAY THAT IT WILL BE OVER QUICKLY, DARLING! G—GOODBYE!

YIIIIII— HAVE MERCY— MERCY!

EEEEEEEEE— WATER, FOR THE LOVE OF HEAVEN!

WITH THOSE TERRIBLE SCREAMS RINGING IN THEIR EARS, THE DOOMED COUPLE SEE A TORCH TOSSED ON THE FAGGOTS AT THEIR FEET...

OH— THE SMOKE! I— (CHOKES)— CAN'T BREATHE! BUT AT LEAST WE'LL DIE TOGETHER, PAUL!



A DEADLY RAIN OF STONES BEGINS TO FALL...

STONE THEM FIRST!

KILL— KILL THE INFIDELS!

I CAN'T STAND THIS— EEEEEEE—

STILL, A QUICK DEATH IS BETTER THAN BURNING! IF ONE OF THOSE STONES WOULD ONLY...

YOU FOUL BRUTES! IF I COULD GET AT YOU!

AAAAHHHHH— OH!

GOODBYE— GOODBYE— GOODBYE! WE'LL BE BACK— BACK— BACK!

AT THAT MOMENT, A COCK CROWS SOMEWHERE NEAR...

COCKLE— DOODLE— DOOOOOO—

AND THE WORLD SEEMS TO WHIRL AND EXPLODE AROUND THE TWO AMERICANS...

HO-HO-HO— GOODBYE!

WENDY!

HEE— HEE— HEE—

PAUL!

A MOMENT LATER THE SUN PEEPS OVER THE HORIZON AND...

MEIN HERR—MEIN HERR! WAKE UP! YOU SHOULD NOT SLEEP IN THIS PLACE— IT IS CURSED!

WHAT? UMMM— W-WE'RE ALIVE, WENDY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

M-MY HEAD! A LUMP— SO SORE! O—DID WE DREAM ALL THAT, PAUL? ABOUT THAT TERRIBLE VILLAGE?

I'VE HEARD ENOUGH! YOU DID NOT DREAM— FOR IT WAS ON THIS VERY SPOT THAT THE VILLAGE OF WALPURGEN USED TO STAND— FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO! THE TURKS, RAIDING NORTH, DESTROYED IT AND BURNED EVERYONE! BUT ONCE EACH HUNDRED YEARS

THE VILLAGE AND THE PEOPLE RETURN AND TAKE A HORRIBLE REVENGE! AND LAST NIGHT WAS THE NIGHT!

The End